

REMARKS

1. In the above referenced Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, and 9 under 35 USC § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Ciccone (U.S. Patent No. 5,917,255). In addition, the Examiner objected to claims 6-8 as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner has allowed claims 10 - 22. These rejections and objections have been traversed and, as such, the applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the allowability of claims 1 - 9.

2. The applicant has amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claims 5 and 6. Since the Examiner stated that claim 6 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, the applicant believes that claim 1 overcomes the present rejection.

With claim 1 now being allowable, dependent claims 2 - 5 and 9, which each introduce additional patentable subject matter, are also in condition for allowance.

A

3. For the foregoing reasons, the applicant believes that claims 1 - 4 and 7 - 9 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that they be passed to allowance. The applicant appreciates the allowance of claims 10 - 22.

4. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone or facsimile if the Examiner believes that such a communication would advance the prosecution of the present invention.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

By:



Timothy W. Markison
Registration No. 33,534
Phone: (512) 342-0612
Fax No. (512) 342-1674

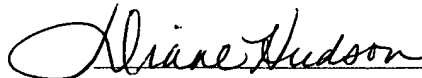
CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

37 C.F.R. 1.8

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, ~~Washington, DC 20231~~, on the date below:

6-12-03

Date



Signature

P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

A